

# **ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

## ***Senate Committee Report***

***Excerpts from the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and  
Education, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2006***

***(Report No. 109-103)***

## **TITLE II--DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

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### **ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

#### **PAYMENTS TO STATES FOR CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS**

Appropriations, 2005	\$2,873,802,000
Budget estimate, 2006	2,071,943,000
House allowance	2,121,643,000
Committee recommendation	2,121,643,000

The Committee recommends \$2,121,643,000 be made available in fiscal year 2006 for payments to States for child support enforcement and family support programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$2,873,802,000 and the budget request includes \$2,071,943,000 for this program. The Committee recommendation provides the full amount requested under current law. The budget request includes net savings of \$49,700,000 based on proposed legislation.

These payments support the States' efforts to promote the self-sufficiency and economic security of low-income families. These funds also support efforts to locate non-custodial parents, determine paternity when necessary, and establish and enforce orders of support. The appropriation, when combined with the \$1,200,000,000 in advance funding provided in last year's bill, an estimated \$208,000,000 from offsetting collections, and an estimated carryover of \$740,173,000, supports a program level of \$4,269,816,000.

The Committee also has provided \$1,200,000,000 in advance funding for the first quarter of fiscal year 2007 for the child support enforcement program, the same as the budget request.

#### **LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Appropriations, 2005	\$2,182,399,000
Budget estimate, 2006	2,000,000,000
House allowance	2,006,799,000
Committee recommendation	2,183,000,000

The Committee recommends \$2,183,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 for LIHEAP. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$2,182,399,000 and the budget request includes \$2,000,000,000 for this program. LIHEAP is made up of two components: the State grant program and the contingency fund.

The Committee recommendation includes \$1,883,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the State grant program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$1,884,799,000 and the budget request includes \$1,800,000,000 for this program. Within the funds provided, the Committee recommends \$500,000 for a feasibility study, as requested by the administration. LIHEAP grants are awarded to States, territories, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations to assist low-income households in meeting the costs of home energy. States receive great flexibility in how they provide assistance, including direct payments to individuals and vendors and direct provision of fuel. These resources are distributed by formula to these entities as defined by statute, based in part on each State's share of home energy expenditures by low-income households.

The Committee recommendation includes \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 for an emergency fund to meet the additional home energy assistance needs arising from a natural disaster or other emergencies. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$297,600,000 and the budget request does not include funds designated as emergency for this program, but did request \$200,000,000 for the contingency fund.

The Committee intends that up to \$27,500,000 of the amount recommended for LIHEAP for fiscal year 2006 be used for the leveraging incentive fund. The fund will provide a percentage match to States for private or non-Federal public resources allocated to low-income home energy benefits.

## **REFUGEE AND ENTRANT ASSISTANCE**

Appropriations, 2005	\$484,394,000
Budget estimate, 2006	552,040,000
House allowance	560,919,000
Committee recommendation	571,140,000

The Committee recommends \$571,140,000 for fiscal year 2006 for refugee and entrant assistance. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$484,394,000 and the budget request includes \$552,040,000 for this program.

The Refugee and Entrant Assistance Program is designed to assist States in their efforts to assimilate refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and adults and minors who are trafficking victims, into American society as quickly and effectively as possible. The program funds State-administered transitional and medical assistance, the voluntary agency matching grant program, programs for victims of trafficking and torture, employment and social services, targeted assistance, and preventive health. Based on an estimated refugee admission ceiling of 70,000, this appropriation enables States to provide at least 8 months of cash and medical assistance to eligible refugees and entrants, a variety of social and educational services, as well as foster care for refugee and entrant unaccompanied minors.

In order to carry out the refugee and entrant assistance program, the Committee recommends \$268,229,000 for transitional and medical assistance including State administration and the voluntary agency program, of which \$4,100,000 is from emergency funds; \$9,915,000 for victims of trafficking; \$151,121,000 for social services; \$4,796,000 for preventive health; and \$49,081,000 for targeted assistance.

For unaccompanied children, pursuant to section 462 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Committee recommends \$78,083,000, of which \$15,000,000 is from emergency funds. Funds are provided for the care and placement of unaccompanied alien minors in the Office of Refugee Resettlement. In fiscal year 2006 there will be approximately 9,600 placements for unaccompanied alien children apprehended in the United States by INS/Homeland Security agents, Border Patrol officers, or other law enforcement agencies. These children are then taken into care pending resolution of their claims for relief under U.S. immigration law, released to an adult family member, or released to a responsible adult guardian.

The Committee also recommends \$9,915,000 to treat and assist victims of torture. These funds may also be used to provide training to healthcare providers to enable them to treat the physical and psychological effects of torture. The Committee acknowledges that well-established treatment centers, such as the Center for Victims of Torture, have developed the knowledge base that has fostered growth of treatment facilities around the country and strengthened treatment services generally. This positive trend may continue if leading centers are able to expand their staffs to create more trainers and improve evaluation and research needed to guide and develop new programs. The Committee recommends ORR support core funding of strong regional programs that invest carefully in building their rehabilitation programs that produce research and knowledge in this new field. Those organizations can then be expected to organize training for mainstream health care providers.

The Committee bill includes \$19,100,000 in emergency funds for the unanticipated and significantly increased demand for services to individuals eligible for assistance, of which \$4,100,000 is for transitional and medical services and \$15,000,000 is for unaccompanied alien children programs. An increasing share of refugee admissions are coming from Africa and Thailand and these refugees have far more costly medical needs than previous arrivals from Russia and Southeast Asian countries due in part to increased health

screening tests and lab cultures, increased medical treatment for parasites, HIV, and multiple drug-resistant TB, and increased prostheses and rehabilitation for machete victims. These refugees also tend to stay on refugee cash assistance longer because they require more intensive services for reading and writing in their native language, English as a Second Language, and job placement. There also has been a much higher than anticipated increase in unaccompanied alien children entering the United States and being placed in the care of ORR. While the fiscal year 2005 appropriation assumed an increase of 20 percent in this program, the actual increases are close to 30 percent. These additional funds are needed to address these unanticipated situations.

The Committee is deeply concerned that accompanied children, even as young as nursing infants, who are apprehended by the Department of Homeland Security [DHS] are being separated from their parents and being placed in the unaccompanied alien children program while their parents are held in separate adult facilities. The Committee is pleased that ORR has taken the initiative to work with DHS to correct this problem and anticipates a prompt resolution.

The Committee is aware that at times ORR allows individual abused, abandoned, or neglected children in its custody to access State dependency proceedings for ultimate care and placement in State foster care or under legal guardianship. The Committee urges ORR to continue this practice in such cases as it is appropriate.

The Committee is pleased with the steps the ORR has taken to improve access to legal representation for children served through this program. ORR has participated in roundtables, and met with various groups to better understand the issue. They have also put together a comprehensive list of pro bono attorneys and guardians to ensure that the children's needs are being served and are currently working on a program that would ensure that resources are available to unaccompanied alien children. The Committee commends ORR for their commitment to providing unaccompanied alien children in its care access to a comprehensive range of services, from legal representatives to access to necessary unique medical care.

The Committee directs that not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit a report on progress made by ORR to deinstitutionalize the care provided to unaccompanied children in its custody, including the utilization of community-based, child welfare centered services.

The Committee is pleased that the majority of the 15,000 Hmong refugees that were admitted will have arrived by the end of fiscal year 2005. The Committee was concerned that unlike prior groups of Hmong refugees, which were made up of military and political leaders with the means and education to succeed in America, these immigrants had spent their lives in a refugee camp. Few, if any, spoke English. Most are under 18 and have little schooling. Even with the greater level of education and skills possessed by prior refugees, statistics indicated that about 38 percent of current Hmong-Americans live in poverty.

Section 412(a)(7) of title IV of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the use of funds appropriated under this account to be used to carry out monitoring, evaluation, and data collection activities to determine the effectiveness of funded programs and to monitor the performance of States and other grantees.

## **CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT**

Appropriations, 2005	\$2,082,921,000
Budget estimate, 2006	2,082,910,000
House allowance	2,082,910,000
Committee recommendation	2,082,910,000

The Committee recommends \$2,082,910,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the child care and development block grant. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$2,082,921,000 and the budget request includes \$2,082,910,000 for this program.

The child care and development block grant supports grants to States to provide low-income families with financial assistance for child care; for improving the quality and availability of child care; and for establishing or expanding child development programs. The funds are used to both expand the services provided to individuals who need child care in order to work, or attend job training or education, and to allow States to continue funding the activities previously provided under the consolidated programs.

The Committee recommendation continues specific earmarks in appropriations language, also included in the budget request, that provide targeted resources to specific policy priorities including \$19,120,000 for the purposes of supporting before and afterschool services, as well as resource and referral programs. This represents the Federal commitment to the activities previously funded under the dependent care block grant. The Committee expects that these funds will not supplant current funding dedicated to resource and referral and school age activities provided by the child care and development block grant. The Committee strongly encourages States to continue to address the matters of before and afterschool care and the establishment of resource and referral programs with the funds provided in this program.

The Committee recommendation includes an additional \$272,672,000 for child care quality activities, and sets aside \$100,000,000 specifically for an infant care quality initiative. These funds are recommended in addition to the 4 percent quality earmark established in the authorizing legislation. The Committee has provided these additional quality funds because of the considerable research that demonstrates the importance of serving children in high quality child care settings which include nurturing providers who are educated in child development and adequately compensated. While considerable progress has been made, the Committee believes States should continue to invest in education and training linked to compensation of the child care workforce in order to improve the overall quality of child care.

The Committee recommendation also provides \$10,000,000 for child care research, demonstration and evaluation activities.

The Committee recommendation for resource and referral activities also includes \$1,000,000 to continue support for the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies' information service, Child Care Aware, and the national toll-free information hotline which links families to local child care services and programs.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT**

Appropriations, 2005	\$1,700,000,000
Budget estimate, 2006	1,700,000,000
House allowance	1,700,000,000
Committee recommendation	1,700,000,000

The Committee recommends \$1,700,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the social services block grant. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$1,700,000,000 and the budget request includes \$1,700,000,000 for this program. The Committee has included bill language that allows States to transfer up to 10 percent of their TANF allotment to the social services block grant.

## **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES PROGRAMS**

Appropriations, 2005	\$9,007,770,000
Budget estimate, 2006	8,386,293,000
House allowance	8,688,707,000
Committee recommendation	9,000,832,000

The Committee recommends \$9,000,832,000 for fiscal year 2006 for children and families services programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$9,007,770,000 and the budget request includes \$8,386,293,000 for this program. In addition, \$10,500,000 in transfers are available under section 241 of the Public Health Service Act.

This appropriation provides funding for programs for children, youth, and families, the developmentally disabled, and Native Americans, as well as Federal administrative costs.

### *Head Start*

The Committee recommends \$6,874,314,000 for fiscal year 2006 for Head Start. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$6,843,114,000 and the budget request includes \$6,899,336,000 for this program. The Committee recommendation includes \$1,388,800,000 in advance funding that will become available on October 1, 2007. The Committee recommendation does not include the \$45,000,000 requested in the budget for

a State pilot project that would allow States to directly administer the Head Start program.

Head Start provides comprehensive development services for low-income children and families, emphasizing cognitive and language development, socioemotional development, physical and mental health, and parent involvement to enable each child to develop and function at his or her highest potential. At least 10 percent of enrollment opportunities in each State are made available to children with disabilities.

The Committee is aware that studies on early childhood that provide clear evidence that the brain undergoes its most dramatic development during the first 3 years of life, when children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn, and reason. Disparities in children's cognitive and social abilities become evident well before they enter Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs at age 4. Early Head Start minimizes these disparities so that children are ready to enter school and learn. The National Evaluation of Early Head Start concluded that Early Head Start is making a positive difference in areas associated with children's success in school, family self-sufficiency, and parental support of child development. Currently only 3 percent of estimated eligible infants and toddlers are enrolled in Early Head Start. Over the past 5 years, the Committee has significantly increased funding for Early Head Start, to provide more low-income infants and toddlers with the positive experiences they need for later school and life successes. The Committee intends to continue this important investment.

The Committee understands the serious need for additional and expanded Head Start facilities among Native American populations and in rural areas. The Committee believes that the Department could help serve these needy communities by providing minor construction funding, as authorized, in remote Native American communities.

The Committee strongly supports the effort to strengthen the qualifications of Head Start teachers. While the Committee is pleased that the percentage of teachers with an associate, baccalaureate, or advanced degree in early childhood education, or a degree in a related field with experience in teaching preschool children has reached 65 percent, the Committee encourages Head Start to continue to work toward the goal of 100 percent. The Committee expects the Department to focus staff development efforts on increasing the educational level of Head Start teachers in order to meet this goal.

The Committee is aware that in May 2005, the Secretary made \$35,000,000 in additional fiscal year 2005 funds available to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs and that these funds, which will be awarded on competitive basis, will allow for at least 4,000 additional children to access Migrant and Seasonal Head Start. The Committee acknowledges that these expansion funds will increase access to this important program, however additional funding may be necessary to adequately serve this population. The Committee requests that the Secretary submit a report on the Bureau's ongoing plans to ensure that Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs are able to serve a larger percentage of the children eligible for services. The Committee continues to point to the 2001 study published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services which

documented that only 19 percent of eligible children were able to access Migrant and Seasonal Head Start.

The Head Start Bureau shall continue to provide the Committee with the number and cost of buses purchased, by region with Head Start in the annual congressional budget justification.

The Committee is conscious of efforts currently being undertaken to improve pre-literacy skills in Head Start children and lauds the administration for its commitment to this effort. However, the Committee continues to caution against anything that would detract from the comprehensive nature of the program in delivering early childhood development and family services. While school readiness is front and center in the goals of Head Start, the elements necessary to achieve that readiness range from adequate nutrition and health screening, to social and emotional development and family building, as well as the cognitive growth of young children.

The Committee is aware that the Government Accountability Office came out on May 17 with the report, 'Head Start: Further Development Could Allow Results of New Test to be Used for Decision Making,' on the National Reporting System [NRS] test. The report stated that analysis was currently incomplete to support its use for the purposes of accountability and targeting training and technical assistance, that grantees have not yet shown that the NRS provides the scope and quality of assessment information needed for holding grantees accountable, and that language experts raised serious concerns about whether the Spanish version of the NRS adequately measures the skills of Spanish-speaking children and whether results from the English and Spanish. Therefore, the Committee directs the Secretary to submit a report to House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act, addressing: (1) a detailed justification to Congress regarding the planned uses of the NRS results and data in terms of program evaluation, professional development, technical assistance, and other activities; (2) an itemization of the costs of development, implementation, and analysis of the NRS, detailing by name, amount, and description of activities each contract or grant to persons or entities involved in its design, development, implementation, or analysis; and (3) the recommendations made by the Technical Working Group established by the Secretary, including an explanation of how the Secretary has addressed or plans to address the Working Group's and the GAO's recommendations.

#### *Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Program*

The Committee recommends \$88,724,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the consolidated runaway and homeless youth program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$88,724,000 and the budget request includes \$88,728,000 for this program. This program was reauthorized under the Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children Protection Act of 2003. In this reauthorization a statutory formula was established to distribute funds between the Basic Center Program and the Transitional Living Program.



This program addresses the crisis needs of runaway and homeless youth and their families through support to local and State governments and private agencies. Basic centers and transitional living programs help address the needs of some of the estimated 500,000 to 1.5 million and homeless youth, many of whom are running away from unsafe or unhealthy living environments. These programs have been proven effective at supporting positive youth development, securing stable and safe living arrangements and providing the skills required to engage in positive relationships with caring adults and contribute to society.

The Committee also recognizes the need for and value of expanding transitional living opportunities for all homeless youth. Therefore, the Committee seeks to preserve the flexibility afforded in current law to respond to the needs of the young people who are most at-risk and in greatest need of transitional living opportunities in their communities by providing additional resources to the existing portfolio of consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs.

It is the Committee's expectation that current and future TLP grantees will continue to provide transitional living opportunities and support to pregnant and parenting homeless youth, as is their current practice. To further ensure that pregnant and parenting homeless youth are able to access transitional living opportunities and support in their communities, the Committee encourages the Secretary, acting through the network of federally-funded runaway and homeless youth training and technical assistance providers, to offer guidance to grantees and others on the programmatic modifications required to address the unique needs of pregnant and parenting youth and on the various sources of funding available for residential services to this population.

#### *Maternity Group Homes*

The Committee recommendation does not include the \$10,000,000 requested in the budget for the maternity group homes program. Under this proposed program, the ACF would provide targeted funding for community-based, adult-supervised group homes for young mothers and their children. These homes would provide safe, stable, nurturing environments for mothers who cannot live safely with their own families and assist them in moving forward with their lives by providing support so they can finish school, acquire job skills, and learn to be good parents.

The Committee expects the Family and Youth Services Bureau to continue to provide the technical assistance needed to enable TLP grantees and their community partners to address the unique needs of young mothers and their children, as well as helping interested entities in identifying sources of funding currently available to provide residential services to this population.

#### *Runaway Youth Prevention Program*

The Committee recommends \$15,179,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the runaway youth prevention program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$15,178,000

and the budget request includes \$15,179,000 for this program. This is a discretionary grant program open to private nonprofit agencies for the provision of services to runaway, homeless, and street youth. Funds may be used for street-based outreach and education, including treatment, counseling, provision of information, and referrals for these youths, many of whom have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse. The goal of this program is to help young people leave the streets.

#### *Child Abuse Programs*

The Committee recommends \$101,779,000 for fiscal year 2006 for child abuse programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$101,778,000 and the budget request includes \$101,784,000 for this program. The recommendation includes \$27,280,000 for State grants, \$31,640,000 for discretionary activities, and \$42,859,000 for community based child abuse prevention.

These programs seek to improve and increase activities at all levels of government which identify, prevent, and treat child abuse and neglect through State grants, technical assistance, research, demonstration, and service improvement.

#### *Abandoned Infants Assistance*

The Committee recommends \$11,955,000 for fiscal year 2006 for abandoned infants assistance. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$11,955,000 and the budget request includes \$11,955,000 for this program.

This program provides grants to public and private non-profit agencies, State and county child welfare agencies, universities, and community-based organizations to develop, implement, and operate demonstration projects that will prevent the abandonment of infants and young children, especially those impacted by substance abuse and HIV and who are at-risk of being or are currently abandoned. By providing respite care for families and care givers and assisting abandoned infants and children to reside with their natural families or in foster care. The Committee recognizes that the rates of prenatal substance abuse and maternal HIV/AIDS have increased, that the related problem of infants abandoned or boarding in hospitals has grown, and that existing grantees have experienced a large increase in demand for services nationwide.

#### *Child Welfare Services*

The Committee recommends \$289,650,000 for fiscal year 2006 for child welfare services. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$289,650,000 and the budget request includes \$289,650,000 for this program.

This program helps State public welfare agencies improve their child welfare services with the goal of keeping families together. State services include: preventive intervention, so that, if possible, children will not have to be removed from their homes; reunification so that children can return home; and development of alternative placements like foster

care or adoption if children cannot remain at home. These services are provided without regard to income.

### *Child Welfare Training*

The Committee recommends \$7,409,000 for fiscal year 2006 for child welfare training. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$7,409,000 and the budget request includes \$7,409,000 for this program.

Under section 426, title IV-B of the Social Security Act, discretionary grants are awarded to public and private nonprofit institutions of higher learning to develop and improve education/training programs and resources for child welfare service providers. These grants upgrade the skills and qualifications of child welfare workers.

Given research on failings in the Child and Family Services Reviews [CFSRs] and the States' continuing challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified child welfare personnel, particularly those who hold a degree in social work, the Committee encourages ACF to continue to provide grants to schools of social work and traineeships to social work students being trained in the specialty of child welfare. The Committee also encourages ACF to provide funding for research into how specially trained social work personnel affect outcomes for children and families.

### *Adoption Opportunities*

The Committee recommends \$27,119,000 for fiscal year 2006 for adoption opportunities. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$27,116,000 and the budget request includes \$27,119,000 for this program.

This program eliminates barriers to adoption and helps find permanent homes for children who would benefit by adoption, particularly children with special needs.

### *Adoption Incentives*

The Committee recommends \$22,846,000 for fiscal year 2006 for adoption incentives. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$31,846,000 and the budget request includes \$31,846,000 for this program. Fewer resources were needed in fiscal year 2005 to make bonus payments to States for the full amount for which they were eligible under this program, so the reduction recommended by the Committee will not have any impact on this program, unused funds will supplement the fiscal year 2006 appropriation in order to maintain a robust incentives program.

The purpose of this program is to provide incentive funds to States to encourage an increase in the number of adoptions of children from the public foster care system. These funds are used to pay States bonuses for increasing their number of adoptions. The appropriation allows incentive payments to be made for adoptions completed prior to September 30, 2007.

### *Adoption Awareness*

The Committee recommends \$12,802,000 for fiscal year 2006 for adoption awareness. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$12,802,000 and the budget request includes \$12,802,000 for this program.

This program was authorized in the Children's Health Act of 2000. The program consists of two activities: the Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program and the Special Needs Awareness Campaign. The Infant Adoption Awareness Training Program provides grants to support adoption organizations in the training of designated health staff, in eligible health centers that provide health services to pregnant women, to inform them about adoption and make referrals on request on an equal basis with all other courses of action. Within the Committee recommendation, \$9,826,000 is available for this purpose.

The Special Needs Adoption Campaign supports grants to carry out a national campaign to inform the public about the adoption of children with special needs. The Committee recommendation includes \$2,976,000 to continue this important activity.

### *Compassion Capital Fund*

The Committee recommends \$95,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the compassion capital fund. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$54,549,000 and the budget request includes \$100,000,000 for this program.

The Committee expects funds made available through this program to supplement and not supplant private resources and encourages the Secretary to require private resources to match grant funding provided to public/private partnerships.

Funds available will support grants to charitable organizations to emulate model social service programs and to encourage research on the best practices of social service organizations.

Of the funds provided, \$45,000,000 is for a new anti-gang initiative. Competitive grants will be awarded to community and faith-based organizations that will foster supportive relationships with youths ages 8-17 through targeted street outreach, direct youths to social services, and present alternatives to gang involvement. These grants will be especially helpful in urban areas such as Philadelphia that have experienced alarming increases in youth gang violence.

### *Social Services Research*

The Committee recommends \$32,012,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the social services research. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$32,012,000 and the budget request includes \$6,000,000 for this program.

The Committee has funded \$6,000,000 of this program through transfers available under section 241 of the Public Health Service Act. These funds support cutting-edge research and evaluation projects in areas of critical national interest. Research includes determining services that are more cost-effective and alternative ways to increase the economic independence of American families.

The Committee notes ACF's efforts to assist States with meeting the extensive record-keeping, reporting and tracking requirements of the TANF program. Working through the State information technology consortium, ACF is providing States with the tools necessary to strengthen and improve the complex IT systems required to support TANF. Plans are now underway to pilot test a data exchange program that will offer States a faster, less expensive means of validating, accessing, modifying and recording TANF data elements. Similarly, on behalf of Child Support Enforcement, the consortium is helping to expand data exchange capabilities between the courts and State child support enforcement agencies as well as increase collection efficiency in States and tribal organizations. Next steps include accessing existing databases used as primary sources for collection-related data of non-custodial parents, and enhancing data-matching capabilities to ensure the integrity of the information being collected. The Committee recommends that both collaborative efforts with the State information technology consortium be continued at their current levels.

#### *Abstinence Education*

The Committee recommends \$105,500,000 for fiscal year 2006 for community based abstinence education. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$103,698,000 and the budget request includes \$142,545,000 for this program. Within the Committee recommendation, \$101,000,000 is provided for community-based abstinence education, \$4,500,000 is provided through an evaluation set-aside, as requested by the administration. In addition, \$50,000,000 is available from pre-appropriated mandatory funds.

This program provides support for the development and implementation of abstinence education programs for adolescents, ages 12 through 18. These programs are unique in that their entire focus is to educate young people and create an environment within communities that supports teen decisions to postpone sexual activity until marriage.

Of the funds provided up to \$10,000,000 may be available for a national abstinence media campaign. The Committee understands that a portion of fiscal year 2005 funds will be used for evaluation purposes. The Committee intends that ACF use available funds to continue support for an independent group to conduct a thorough and rigorous evaluation of this campaign.

#### *Developmental Disabilities*

The Committee recommends \$171,561,000 for fiscal year 2006 for programs administered by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The comparable

funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$168,575,000 and the budget request includes \$168,561,000 for these programs. Within the funds provided, \$156,682,000 is for carrying out the Developmental Disability Act, and \$14,879,000 is for carrying out the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities supports community-based delivery of services which promote the rights of persons of all ages with developmental disabilities. Developmental disability is defined as severe, chronic disability attributed to mental or physical impairments manifested before age 22, which causes substantial limitations in major life activities. The ADD also administers monies for election assistance for individuals with disabilities. This program is for individuals with any type of disability.

Of the funds provided, the Committee recommends \$72,496,000 for State councils. These councils assist each State in promoting the development of a comprehensive, statewide, consumer and family-centered system which provides a coordinated array of culturally-competent services, and other assistance for individuals with development disabilities. State councils undertake a range of activities including demonstration of new approaches, program and policy analysis, interagency collaboration and coordination, outreach and training.

The Committee recommends \$39,109,000 for protection and advocacy grants. This formula grant program provides funds to States to establish protection and advocacy systems to protect the legal and human rights of persons with developmental disabilities who are receiving treatment, services, or rehabilitation within the State.

The Committee recommends \$14,879,000 for disabled voter services. Of these funds, \$10,000,000 is to promote disabled voter access, and the remaining \$4,879,000 is for disabled voters protection and advocacy systems. The election assistance for individuals with disabilities program was authorized in the Help America Vote Act of 2002. The program enables an applicant to establish, expand, and improve access to, and participation by, any individual with a disability in the election process.

The Committee recommends \$11,529,000 for projects of national significance to assist persons with developmental disabilities. This program funds grants and contracts providing nationwide impact by developing new technologies and applying and demonstrating innovative methods to support the independence, productivity, and integration into the community of persons with developmental disabilities. The Committee recognizes the potential benefits that assistive technology can have for individuals with developmental disabilities. Of these funds, \$4,000,000 is available to expand activities of the Family Support Program. The Committee's placement of funds for family support within the Projects of National Significance account does not provide ACF with discretion on this definition of family support as defined in Title II of the Developmental Disability Act. The Committee makes a crucial distinction between support services designed for families of children with disabilities and support services designed for an individual with a disability. The Committee intends that these funds be

used for the support and assistance of families of children with disabilities, in accordance with the statute.

The Committee recommends \$33,548,000 for the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities [UCEDDs] which is a network of 61 centers that are interdisciplinary education, research and public service units of a university system or are public or non-profit entities associated with universities. UCEDDs conduct research, develop evidence based practices and teach thousands of parents, professionals, students and people with disabilities about critical disability areas such as early intervention, health care, community-based services, inclusive and meaningful education, transition from school to work, employment, housing, assistive technology, aging with a disability and transportation. The Centers serve as the major vehicle to translate disability related research into community practice and service systems and to train the next cohort of future professionals who will provide services and supports to an increasingly diverse population of people with disabilities.

The increase provided in the bill will allow funding for the three new Centers established in fiscal year 2005 to be increased to the same grant award level as the existing 61 Centers, as well as to establish additional Center grants in the States that currently have unserved and underserved populations, and support additional training initiatives.

#### *Native American Programs*

The Committee recommends \$44,780,000 for fiscal year 2006 for Native American programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$44,786,000 and the budget request includes \$44,780,000 for this program.

The Administration for Native Americans [ANA] assists Indian tribes and Native American organizations in planning and implementing long-term strategies for social and economic development through the funding of direct grants for individual projects, training and technical assistance, and research and demonstration programs.

#### *Community Services*

The Committee recommends \$708,895,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the community services programs. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$726,506,000 and the budget request includes \$24,699,000 for this program.

Within the funds provided, the Committee recommends \$636,793,000 for the community services block grant [CSBG]. These funds are used to make formula grants to States and Indian tribes to provide a wide range of services and activities to alleviate causes of poverty in communities and to assist low-income individuals in becoming self-sufficient.

The Committee rejects the administration's recommendation to eliminate the community services block grant funding. Although a restrictive Committee allocation prevented CSBG funding from being increased this year, the Committee continues to recognize the

importance of CSBG and the Community Action Agencies it funds in helping meet the extraordinary challenges facing low-income communities.

The Nation's Community Action Agency network relies on CSBG funding to help initiate and administer programs designed to alleviate poverty. The universal characteristic of these CSBG-funded programs is that they provide people with the resources and the tools to become self-sufficient. The Committee understands that the Department of Health and Human Services, and its Office of Community Services in particular, could better use this network in developing future policy initiatives. The Committee notes that in a number of States, including Iowa and Pennsylvania, CAA-initiated family development and self-sufficiency programs are an integral component of welfare reform efforts. The administration is encouraged to look for further nationwide linkages between those individuals seeking to leave the welfare system and become self-sufficient and the many family development and self-sufficiency strategies operated by Community Action Agencies.

The Committee expects the Office of Community Services [OCS] to release funding to States in the most timely manner and also expects States to make funds available promptly. The Committee is aware that the Office of Community Services and some States have been extraordinarily delinquent in providing funds to local eligible entities.

In addition, the Committee again expects the Office of Community Services to inform the State CSBG grantees of any policy changes affecting carryover CSBG funds within a reasonable time after the beginning of the Federal fiscal year.

Several other discretionary programs are funded from this account. Funding for these programs is recommended at the following levels for fiscal year 2006: community economic development, \$32,731,000; individual development accounts, \$24,699,000; rural community facilities, \$7,492,000; and community food and nutrition, \$7,180,000. The Committee did not provide funds for the national youth sports program.

The Committee continues to support strongly the Community Economic Development program because of the substantial record of achievement that Community Development Corporations have compiled in working in distressed urban and rural communities. The Committee, in particular, notes that Federal funds leverage substantial non-Federal resources in meeting the objectives of this program. Therefore, it is the Committee's intent that appropriated funds should be allocated to the maximum extent possible in the form of grants to qualified Community Development Corporations in order to maximize the leveraging power of the Federal investment and the number and amount of set-asides should be reduced to the most minimal levels. The Committee requests an operation plan for how OCS plans to use appropriated funds consistent with the Committee's expectations. This plan should include a detailed breakdown of planned expenditures for program support, technical assistance, contracts, and research and grants.

Community economic development grants are made to private, nonprofit community development corporations, which in turn provide technical and financial assistance to



business and economic development projects that target job and business opportunities for low income citizens. The Committee has included bill language clarifying that Federal funds made available through this program may be used for financing for construction and rehabilitation and loans or investments in private business enterprises owned by Community Development Corporations.

Of the total provided, the Committee has included \$5,436,000 for the Job Opportunities for Low-Income Individuals [JOLI] program authorized under the Family Support Act to target community development activities to create jobs for people on public assistance. This demonstration program provides grants on a competitive basis to non-profit organizations to create new employment and business opportunities for TANF recipients and other low-income individuals. Funding also supports technical and financial assistance for private employers that will result in the creation of full-time permanent jobs for eligible individuals. The Committee recognizes that continued funding of this program would provide opportunities for more low-income individuals. The Committee expects that experienced community development corporations be given appropriate consideration for grants under this program.

Most of the drinking water and wastewater systems in the country that are not in compliance with Federal standards are in communities of 3,000 or fewer. Rural Community Assistance Programs [RCAPs] use funds available from the Rural Community Facilities Program to assist a number of communities in gaining access to adequate community facilities, gaining financing for new or improved water and wastewater systems and in complying with Federal standards.

The Committee has included bill language allocating funding to the Office of Community Services for Rural Community Facilities Technical Assistance as authorized under section 680(3)(B) of the Community Services Block Grant Act. In providing this funding, the Committee expects that it be used solely for the purpose of improving water and wastewater facilities in poor, rural communities. The Committee intends that funds provided above the request shall be made available to the six regional RCAPs.

The Committee is concerned that many small and very small community water and wastewater treatment systems might be most vulnerable to terrorist attack, and yet least prepared to deal with the issue. The Committee urges OCS to continue to support RCAP Small Community Infrastructure Safety and Security Training and Technical Assistance project, which provides State, regional and national infrastructure safety and security training workshops and on-site technical assistance targeted to small and very small community water and wastewater treatment systems. The goal of the project is to improve the capacity of small systems to better prepare for emergencies, develop emergency preparedness training manuals for small water systems, identify appropriate technologies to secure such systems, and provide technical assistance to small communities struggling to deal with these issues.

*Domestic Violence Hotline*

The Committee recommends \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the national domestic violence hotline. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$3,224,000 and the budget request includes \$3,000,000 for this program.

This is a cooperative agreement which funds the operation of a national, toll-free, 24-hours-a-day telephone hotline to provide information and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

#### *Battered Women's Shelters*

The Committee recommends \$125,991,000 for fiscal year 2006 for battered women's shelters program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$125,630,000 and the budget request includes \$125,991,000 for this program.

This is a formula grant program to support community-based projects which operate shelters and provide related assistance for victims of domestic violence and their dependents. Emphasis is given to projects which provide counseling, advocacy, and self-help services to victims and their children.

#### *Early Learning Opportunities Program*

The Committee does not include funds for fiscal year 2006 for the early learning opportunities program. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$35,712,000 and the budget request did not include funds for this program.

This program supports grants to local community councils comprised of representatives from agencies involved in early learning programs, parent organizations and key community leaders. Funds are used to increase the capacity of local organizations to facilitate development of cognitive skills, language comprehension and learning readiness; enhance childhood literacy; improve the quality of early learning programs through professional development and training; and remove barriers to early learning programs.

#### *Faith-Based Center*

The Committee recommends \$1,400,000 for fiscal year 2006 for the operation of the Department's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$1,375,000 and the budget request includes \$1,400,000 for this program.

#### *Mentoring Children of Prisoners*

The Committee recommends \$49,993,000 for fiscal year 2006 for mentoring children of prisoners. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$49,598,000 and the budget request includes \$49,993,000 for this program.

The mentoring children of prisoners program was authorized in 2001 under section 439 of the Social Security Act. The purpose of this program is to help children while their parents are imprisoned and includes activities that keep children connected to a parent in prison in order to increase the chances that the family will come together successfully when the parent is released. As a group, children of prisoners are less likely than their peers to succeed in school and more likely to become engaged in delinquent behavior.

#### *Independent Living Training Vouchers*

The Committee recommends \$46,623,000 for fiscal year 2006 for independent living training vouchers. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$46,623,000 and the budget request includes \$59,999,000 for this program.

These funds will support vouchers of up to \$5,000 for college tuition, or vocational training for individuals who age out of the foster care system so they can be better prepared to live independently and contribute productively to society. Studies have shown that 25,000 youth leave foster care each year at age 18 and just 50 percent will have graduated high school, 52 percent will be unemployed and 25 percent will be homeless for one or more nights.

#### *Program Administration*

The Committee recommends \$186,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 for program administration. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$185,210,000 and the budget request includes \$185,217,000 for this program.

The Committee continues its interest in the Department's Child and Family Services reviews. These reviews are an effective method for monitoring the progress States are making in assuring the safety, health, and permanency for children in child welfare and foster care as required in the Adoption and Safe Families Act. The Committee encourages the Department to make available sufficient resources to ensure full implementation of the new collaborative monitoring system. The Committee directs ACF to continue to provide information on the progress of the reviews in the annual congressional justification.

### **PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES**

Appropriations, 2005	\$403,586,000
Budget estimate, 2006	410,000,000
House allowance	404,000,000
Committee recommendation	395,000,000

The Committee recommends \$395,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 for promoting safe and stable families. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$403,586,000 and the budget request includes \$410,000,000 for this program.

Funding available provides grants to States in support of: (1) family preservation services; (2) time-limited family reunification services; (3) community-based family support services; and (4) adoption promotion and support services. The Committee notes that most of the Federal funding related to child welfare is provided for the removal and placement of children outside of their own homes. Funds available through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program are focused on supporting those activities that can prevent family crises from emerging which might require the temporary or permanent removal of a child from his or her own home.

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families program is comprised of \$305,000,000 in capped entitlement funds authorized by the Social Security Act and \$90,000,000 in discretionary appropriations.

### **PAYMENTS TO STATES FOR FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION ASSISTANCE**

Appropriations, 2005	\$5,037,900,000
Budget estimate, 2006	4,852,800,000
House allowance	4,852,800,000
Committee recommendation	4,852,800,000

The Committee recommends \$4,852,800,000 for fiscal year 2006 for payments to States for foster care and adoption assistance. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2005 is \$5,037,900,000 and the budget request includes \$4,852,800,000 for this program. In addition, the Committee recommendation concurs with the administration's request of \$1,730,000 for an advance appropriation for the first quarter of fiscal year 2007.

The Foster Care Program provides Federal reimbursement to States for: maintenance payments to families and institutions caring for eligible foster children, matched at the Federal medical assistance percentage [FMAP] rate for each State; and administration and training costs to pay for the efficient administration of the Foster Care Program, and for training of foster care workers and parents.

The Adoption Assistance Program provides funds to States for maintenance costs and the nonrecurring costs of adoption for children with special needs. The goal of this program is to facilitate the placement of hard-to-place children in permanent adoptive homes, and thus prevent long, inappropriate stays in foster care. As in the Foster Care Program, State administrative and training costs are reimbursed under this program.

The Independent Living Program provides services to foster children under 18 and foster youth ages 18-21 to help them make the transition to independent living by engaging in a variety of services including educational assistance, life skills training, health services and room and board. States are awarded grants from the annual appropriation proportionate to their share of the number of children in foster care, subject to a matching requirement.

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